

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 OSLO 2143

FOR EUR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, PFOR, NATO, NO
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER NORDLI

1. THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER NORDLI IN LONDON NEXT WEEK COMES AT A CRITICAL JUNCTURE FOR NORWAY'S 49 YEAR OLD LEADER. HE SEES THIS AS AN IMPORTANT CHANCE FOR HIM TO PUT NORWEGIAN VIEWS BEFORE THE PRESIDENT. IT WILL GIVE THE PRESIDENT AN OPPORTUNITY TO OUTLINE U.S. VIEWS AND TO PROVIDE VALUABLE REASSURANCES ON THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO NORWAY.

2. NORDLI: THE MAN

3. AT THE MEETING, THE PRESIDENT MAY FIND NORWAY'S PRIME MINISTER TO BE INTERESTED AND SINCERE BUT SOMEWHAT SLOW, EVEN AWKWARD AND SHY. NORDLI IS BY NATURE A DELIBERATE MAN, AND THOUGH HIS ENGLISH IS ADEQUATE, HE IS SOMEWHAT HESITANT IN SPEAKING IT. THE PRESIDENT SHOULD NOT BE DECEIVED BY NORDLI'S APPARENT SLOWNESS. NORDLI IS IN FACT A PERCEPTIVE LEADER WITH A CLEARLY DEVELOPED POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND A GOOD IDEA HOW TO ACHIEVE HIS OBJECTIVES. AN ACCOUNTANT BY TRAINING, A POLITICIAN BY NATURE AND EXPERIENCE, HE IS A QUIET BUT EFFECTIVE PROPONENT OF LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC-SOCIALIST IDEALS. BUT, NORDLI IS ABOVE ALL A REALIST AND PRAGMATIST. HE

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RECOGNIZES THAT AS NORWAY'S WEALTH INCREASES, HE PEOPLE ARE BECOMING MIDDLE CLASS IN OUTLOOK AND MOVING TO THE CENTER POLITICALLY. SINCE TAKING OFFICE 15 MONTHS AGO, NORDLI HAS THEREFORE DELIBERATELY STEERED HIS GOVERNING LABOR PARTY AWAY FROM ITS PREVIOUS MORE LEFTIST IDEOLOGICAL LINE TOWARD A PRAGMATIC CENTRIST PROGRAM. HE HAS BEEN REWARDED BY CONSTANTLY INCREASING SUPPORT IN THE GALLUP POLLS AND BY THE SIGHT OF HIS

NON-SOCIALIST OPPONENTS SCRABBLING TO FIND ISSUES FOR THIS SEPTEMBER'S ELECTIONS.

4. NORDLI IS A GOOD AND RELIABLE FRIEND OF THE U.S., WITH A SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING OF OUR COUNTRY. HE RECOGNIZES THAT THE U.S. IS THE BACKBONE OF NORWAY'S SECURITY. HE IS ALSO ACUTELY AWARE OF NORWAY'S EXPOSED GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION ALONGSIDE THE USSR, AND IS A STAUNCH ADVOCATE OF NORWAY'S ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE NATO ALLIANCE. HE HAS STRESSED THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF NATO CHIEFS OF STATE ATTENDING THE SUMMIT, AND IS BREAKING AWAY FROM HIS MOST IMPORTANT LABOR PARTY CONVENTION TO ATTEND HIMSELF.

5. NORDLI ALSO STRESSES NORWAY'S MORAL AND CULTURAL TIES WITH THE COMMUNITY OF WESTERN INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACIES. NORDLI ASSERTED THIS VIEW AND HIS STRONG PERSONAL INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE APRIL 9 SOCIALIST SUMMIT MEETING IN AMSTERDAM WHEN HE FIRMLY SUPPORTED THE PRESIDENT'S POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

6. THE DOMESTIC SITUATION

7. NORDLI IS UP FOR ELECTION IN SEPTEMBER. IT WILL BE A CLOSE ONE. THE LABOR PARTY HAS DOMINATED NORWEGIAN POLITICS FOR 40 YEARS. IT HAS BEEN LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ENORMOUS IMPROVEMENT IN NORWEGIAN LIFE DURING THAT TIME, AND IS TO SOME EXTENT SUFFERING FROM ITS OWN SUCCESS. BEFORE NORDLI'S INITIATIVE TO SEEK SUPPORT IN THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL CENTER, NORWAY'S GROWING MIDDLE CLASS SOCIETY WAS BEGINNING TO STRAY
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FROM THE LABOR FOLD TOWARD THE NON-SOCIALIST PARTIES. WHILE NORDLI MAY HAVE STEMMED THIS TREND, HE HAS NOT STOPPED IT, AND MOST EXPERTS PREDICT AN EXCEPTIONALLY CLOSE ELECTION IN SEPTEMBER. LOOKING AT THE ELECTION FROM THE U.S. STANDPOINT, THE POLICY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NORDLI'S LABOR PARTY AND THE OPPOSITION PARTIES ARE NOT SIGNIFICANT SINCE ALL MAJOR PARTIES SUPPORT NORWAY'S ORIENTATION TO THE WEST.

8. THE RECENT RUNAWAY OIL WELL IN THE NORTH SEA WILL HAVE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE LABOR PARTY. THE ACCIDENT PROVOKED EMOTIONAL OVER-REACTION IN NORWAY BEFORE IT WAS FINALLY CONTROLLED BY RED ADAIR AND HIS MEN. IT RIVETED NORWEGIAN ATTENTION ON THE GOVERNMENT'S OIL POLICY, WHICH EVEN BEFORE THE SPILL PROMISED TO BE THE MAJOR ELECTION ISSUE. THE SPILL WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY HURT THE LABOR PARTY AT THE POLLS IN SEPTEMBER, AND COULD LEAD TO A SLOWING OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANNED OFFSHORE OIL DEVELOPMENT.

9. DESPITE HER WEALTH, NORWAY IS NOT WITHOUT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

THE WORLD RECESSION HURT HER VITAL SHIPPING INDUSTRY AND CAUSED DISLOCATION IN OTHER INDUSTRIES. NORDLI PLANS TO MENTION TO THE PRESIDENT NORWAY'S SERIOUS CONCERN ABOUT THE IMPENDING U.S. CARGO PREFERENCE LEGISLATION, WHICH THE GON BELIEVES MAY UNFAIRLY HURT A LOYAL NATO ALLY, AND THEREFORE COULD SPILL OVER TO EFFECT US-NORWEGIAN RELATIONS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 OSLO 2143

FOR EUR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN

10. NORWAY GENERALLY LOOKS TO THE U.S. AS THE LEADER OF THE FREE WORLD TO PLAY THE KEY ROLE IN LEADING THE WESTERN DEMOCRACIES OUT OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC RECESSION WHILE DEFENDING THE PRINCIPLE OF FREE TRADE. NORDLI BELIEVES THAT FULL EMPLOYMENT STANDS AT THE HEART OF WESTERN DEMOCRACY AND HE AND HIS FINANCIAL ADVISERS LOOK TO THE US TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN RESTIMULATING THE WORLD'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY. BECAUSE NORWAY WILL NOT ATTEND THE ECONOMIC SUMMIT, NORDLI WILL BE VERY INTERESTED IN THE PRESIDENT'S OUTLOOK ON WORLD ECONOMIC MATTERS.

11. NORWEGIAN FOREIGN POLICY

12. ONE OF NORDLI'S PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES TODAY IS NORWAY'S DETERIORATING BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE USSR. THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE DISCUSSING IMPORTANT ISSUES IN THE BARENTS SEA AREA WHERE THEY HAVE GENUINE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND WHERE THE SOVIETS HAVE OFTEN EMPLOYED THE CARROT AND STICK TREATMENT ON THEIR NEIGHBOR. THE NORWEGIAN PUBLIC ATTITUDE TOWARD THE USSR HAVE WORSENEED RECENTLY TOO BECAUSE OF SOVIET SPYING ACTIVITIES IN NORWAY, SOVIET HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, AND THE USSR'S DISAPPOINTING CSCE PERFORMANCE.

13. THE NORWEGIANS SEEK REDUCED TENSIONS WITH THE SOVIETS AND
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IMPROVED EAST-WEST RELATIONS AS THE NECESSARY BACKDROP FOR
THEIR POLICY OF BALANCING DETERRENCE WITH LOW-TENSION IN THE
NORTHERN REGION. SUCH A POSTURE THEY BELIEVE GIVES THEM GREATER
FREEDOM OF ACTION IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. CONSEQUENTLY,
NORDLI RECOGNIZES NORWAY HAS A VESTED INTEREST IN DETENTE AND
HE WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT U.S. DETENTE POLICY. BUT, HE ALSO
IS AWARE THAT IF EAST-WEST RELATIONS COOL, NORWAY'S RELATIONS
WITH THE USSR MAY ALSO SUFFER. NORDLI PLANS TO OUTLINE HIS
VIEWS ON THESE MATTERS TO THE PRESIDENT.

14. SINCE WE HAVE NO MAJOR OUTSTANDING BILATERAL PROBLEMS
(WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THE CARGO PREFERENCE LEGISLATION),
THE MAIN U.S. OBJECTIVE FROM THE MEETING SHOULD BE THE OPPORTUNITY
IT GIVES THE PRESIDENT TO STATE FORCEFULLY THE U.S. COMMITMENT
TO NORWAY'S SECURITY AND OUR ABILITY TO MEET THAT COMMITMENT
IN DEFENDING THE ALLIANCE'S NORTHERN FLANK. NORDLI SHOULD ALSO
COME AWAY FROM THE MEETING WITH A SENSE OF GENERAL U.S. SUPPORT
FOR NORWAY IN HER INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT RELATIONS WITH
THE SOVIET UNION. FINALLY, I HOPE THE PRESIDENT CAN ENCOURAGE
NORDLI TO CONSIDER STEPS THAT NORWAY MIGHT TAKE TO EXPAND
ITS OWN ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF NATO, SUCH AS INCREASED
DEFENSE SPENDING.
ANDERS

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